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**Build, Develop, Support: Phase 0 as the Decisive Counterterrorism Operation  
A Case Study of North West Africa**

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**Defense Intelligence Agency**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_**

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## **Abstract**

Since the extremist Islamist terrorist group al Qaida began targeting U.S. interests in the 1990s, counterterrorism operations against the group predominately consisted of kinetic operations to capture or kill senior leaders of the group. While operations like the 1 May 2011 raid that resulted in the death of Usama bin Laden, the al Qaida leader, have a role in U.S. counterterrorism operations, kinetic operations against terrorist group members only address the symptom of the problem vice the root cause. During the 2000s, al Qaida expanded to incorporate regional violent extremist Islamist groups outside the heart of the Middle East. Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) remains a regional threat in North West Africa and still maintains its regional goals. The regional targets and motivations provide U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) a unique opportunity to eliminate the elements that provide AQIM a veneer of legitimacy. This paper will discuss AFRICOM's mission to collaborate and cooperate with the interagency to shape the Phase 0 environment to prevent the rise and growth of violent extremist Islamist groups. Challenges faced by AFRICOM and the interagency will be examined with recommendations how to overcome them via the "3D" concept of development, defense, and diplomacy.

Although Usama bin Laden and his extremist Islamist terrorist group, al Qaida, threatened and targeted United States interests for years, it was not until the group successfully launched an attack against targets in the United States that significant military operations were undertaken to defeat the group. Over the past ten years, the United States military continues kinetic operations against al Qaida and its associated groups. However, as insurgencies arose in Afghanistan and Iraq, with extremist Islamist terrorist groups as participants, American policymakers and military leaders realized military operations alone could not defeat terrorist groups. The recent uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt further emphasized the importance of rule of law and civil society in development of stable and peaceful societies.

As American attention focused on the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts, al Qaida built relationships with regional extremist Islamist terrorist groups, including in North West Africa. This region, North Africa and the Sahel, with its historical links to the Middle East through religion and commerce, also maintains links with Europe due to colonialism. This makes North West Africa, and its predominant extremist Islamist terrorist group, al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), attractive to al Qaida as it continues to target the West and those regimes that partner with it.

Following its establishment, U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) counterterrorism efforts primarily focus on development projects and military training exercises. At best, current counterterrorism efforts to combat violent Islamist extremism address the symptoms of the threat posed by these groups vice establishing conditions to significantly mitigate the threat to the United States and her partners. AFRICOM has the opportunity to work with the interagency and partner nations to eliminate the root causes of violent Islamist extremist groups, particularly AQIM. To set the conditions for long-term stability in North West Africa, AFRICOM should

continue its efforts to build host nation capacity and improve U.S. interagency operations, which will provide unity of effort for U.S. counterterrorism operations to defeat AQIM.

## **Scope and Definitions**

As will be discussed, multiple Executive Branch organizations have significant roles in the United States' fight against terrorism. Washington's strategy to combat terrorism has two mutually reinforcing elements: kinetic targeting efforts led by the Department of Defense (DOD) and development efforts led by the Department of State (DOS). This paper will discuss AFRICOM's efforts to aid development efforts in North West Africa, as this Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) deemphasizes traditional military operations. CONPLAN 7500, drafted by U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), describes these indirect operations as the "enduring" and "decisive" operations against terrorism.<sup>1</sup> Kinetic counterterrorism operations targeting high value individuals are a critical element to the American strategy, but are beyond the scope of this paper as they address the symptom of extremist Islamist terrorism vice working to eliminate the root causes of the issue.

Islamism, or political Islam, evolved in the post-colonial era in the Middle East, when nationalist ideologies and state-controlled economies did not deliver on promises of economic growth.<sup>2</sup> Islamism's foundations for governance, economies, and societal norms are the teachings of Islam: the *Qur'an* and the *hadith* (teachings of the Prophet Muhammad).<sup>3</sup> However, Islamism is not a homogeneous ideology, as Islamist groups span the spectrum from non-violent,

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<sup>1</sup> ADM Eric T. Olson, USN, "A Balanced Approach to Irregular Warfare," *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, Spring 2009, [www.ciaonet.org/journals/jisa/index.html](http://www.ciaonet.org/journals/jisa/index.html) (accessed February 16, 2011), 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 123-133.

<sup>3</sup> Graham E. Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no.2 (March/April 2002); Brown, *Religion and State*, 136, 138.

the current Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, to the repressive, the 1990s Taliban regime.<sup>4</sup> The desire of some Islamists to use violence to achieve their political and societal goals, led to the development of violent offshoots, which eventually provided the foundation for extremist Islamist terrorist groups, both focused on a single country and transnational, like al Qaida.

### **History and Status of Extremist Islamist Terrorism in North West Africa**

AQIM has its roots in the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s, before its affiliation with al Qaida or expansion into the Sahel. However, the Algerian Civil War occurred due to Algeria's colonial history with France and the 1954-1962 war for independence. French rule of Algeria began in 1830, considering this North African territory part of France, unlike other French colonies. Over the decades, significant political and economic differences emerged between the native Arab and Berber Muslims and the *pied noirs*, the European settlers in Algeria. On Victory in Europe Day 1945, the Muslims in the town of Sétif joined the celebrations of France's liberation, but focused their slogans on Algerian independence.<sup>5</sup> The historical record is unclear as to the violence's ignition, but over five days, Muslims killed 103 *pied noir* in the town; following this, French security forces killed anywhere between 1,020 and 45,000 Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

Following Sétif, the French government attempted to provide more political autonomy for Algeria, unwilling to grant it independence. However, the *pied noir* rigged elections to remain in power despite being the minority.<sup>7</sup> By 1954, a small group of Muslims determined Algeria must be independent and was willing to fight for it, particularly after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina. On 1 November 1954, the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN)

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<sup>4</sup> Fuller, "Political Islam."

<sup>5</sup> Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 24.

<sup>6</sup> Horne, *Savage War*, 26-7; John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation, Second Edition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 149.

<sup>7</sup> Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 152.

launched a nationwide bombing campaign, unleashing a bloody eight-year insurgency against the French.<sup>8</sup> Algeria became independent on 15 September 1962, with the FLN as sole rulers.

Like most Arab independence movements following World War II, the FLN was entrenched in secularism and Arab nationalism. However, as the decades progressed, the Algerian population became increasingly dissatisfied with the FLN's inability to provide basic resources and its reliance on political and social repression.<sup>9</sup> This trend was seen throughout the Middle East, as populations became increasingly disenchanted with the failures of their governments' socialist leanings and began to look at other alternatives, primarily Islamism. In 1989, a group of clerics established the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), which the FLN regime allowed to form during a period of brief political liberalization.<sup>10</sup>

The FIS's ultimate political goal, to establish an Islamic state in Algeria and implementing *shari'a* law, eventually led to the end of political reform and the civil war of the 1990s. The FIS soundly defeated the FLN during the 1990 local and provincial elections, causing concern within the FLN and the Algerian military.<sup>11</sup> Twice postponed parliamentary elections were held in December 1991, where the FIS won almost half of the votes. Following this, the military conducted a soft coup in January 1992: overturning the electoral results, forcing the FLN president to resign, and repressing the FIS.<sup>12</sup>

While numerous FIS leaders supported the use of violence against the Algerian regime in the 1990s, the group's connection to the myriad of violent extremist Islamist groups during this decade remains murky. The FIS is most often connected to the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA),

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<sup>8</sup> Horne, *Savage War*, 94-96

<sup>9</sup> Martin Stone, *The Agony of Algeria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 155-6.

<sup>10</sup> Stone, *Agony*, 163-4; James D. Le Sueur, *Between Terror and Democracy: Algeria since 1989* (London: Zed Books, 2010), 36-7.

<sup>11</sup> Le Sueur, *Terror and Democracy*, 43-4.

<sup>12</sup> Le Sueur, *Terror and Democracy*, 50-1; Stone, *Agony of Algeria*, 173.



but FIS leaders did not appear to maintain any operational control over the group.<sup>13</sup> GIA conducted massive bombing campaigns both in Algeria and in France, which has a large immigrant Algerian population.<sup>14</sup> By the end of the 1990s, “reasonable estimates” place the number of Algerian civilians killed by GIA at 200,000; during the most violent years, 1993-1995, over 500 people died a week.<sup>15</sup>

In 1998, reacting to the GIA’s violent history and a possible amnesty with the Algerian government, a GIA commander broke away from the group and formed the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC). The GSPC attempted to separate itself from its violent predecessor, supposedly targeting the Algerian military vice the Algerian population.<sup>16</sup> During this period, the Algerian Civil War was ending, but the GSPC remained active, targeting both Algerian soldiers and civilians to rob them and kidnap them for ransom. The GSPC additionally leveraged the trans-Sahara criminal smuggling routes for revenue while conducting periodic attacks against Algerian, Malian, and Mauritanian border officials, leveraging tactics utilized by GIA fighters in the mid-1990s.<sup>17</sup> By the late 1990s, the GSPC began to cultivate connections with al Qaida.<sup>18</sup>

However, it was not until September 2006 that GSPC officially pledged allegiance to Usama bin Laden and al Qaida; in January 2007, it officially changed its name to incorporate the term “al Qaida.” Following the merger, AQIM increased its attacks within Algeria, particularly

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<sup>13</sup> Le Sueur, *Terror and Democracy*, 129.

<sup>14</sup> Le Sueur, *Terror and Democracy*, 63, 71, 125, 130-2.

<sup>15</sup> Le Sueur, *Terror and Democracy*, 143; Luis Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War, 1990-1998* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 246.

<sup>16</sup> Le Sueur, *Terror and Democracy*, 144-5;

<sup>17</sup> Emily Hunt, "Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A 'Thorn in the Neck' of the United States?" Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 2007, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=266> (accessed March 29, 2011), 6; Martinez, *Algerian Civil War*, 119-146.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Al-Qaeda In the Islamic Maghreb: Algerian Challenge or Global Threat?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2009, [http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ceip/0017949/f\\_0017949\\_15376.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ceip/0017949/f_0017949_15376.pdf) (accessed March 21, 2011), 4.

suicide bombings against Western targets, but has recently encountered difficulties maintaining a high operational tempo.<sup>19</sup> Algerian military operations against AQIM have made the country's urban areas a hostile environment for the group. As a result, AQIM now focuses efforts on the Sahel, increasing its reliance on criminal activity vice terrorist attacks.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, to ensure its survival, AQIM has nurtured relationships with regional criminal groups vice regional Islamist extremist groups, further blurring the line of whether the group is a criminal or terrorist threat.<sup>21</sup>

### **AFRICOM's Current Counterterrorism Activities**

AFRICOM confronts two different problems when looking at the AQIM threat. First, is the external, the mechanics of AQIM: that combating the group is not amenable to a purely military course of action, as previously discussed. Second, are the internal issues, the structural and funding issues that face AFRICOM and the interagency in confronting this threat. The first influences the structure and actions taken by the second. AFRICOM needs to continue capacity building, improve the interagency process, and support regional counterterrorism efforts.

On 1 October 2008, AFRICOM became an independent Unified Command, separating the African continent from Europe in the U.S. military's worldview. This separation recognized the growing importance of Africa and its fifty-two countries for U.S. national security interests. According to its mission statement, AFRICOM, "...in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel L. Byman, "Al Qaeda's M&A Strategy," The Brookings Institute, December 7, 2010, [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/1207\\_al\\_qaeda\\_byman.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/1207_al_qaeda_byman.aspx) (accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Lianne Kennedy-Boudali, "Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategy Across Africa's Sahel Region", The RAND Corporation, November 17, 2009, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND\\_CT335.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND_CT335.pdf) (accessed April 5, 2011), 4; Andre LeSage, "Africa's Irregular Security Threats: Challenges for U.S. Engagement," Institute for National Strategic Studies, May 2010, [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/docUploaded/SF255\\_LeSage.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/docUploaded/SF255_LeSage.pdf) (accessed March 29, 2011), 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-Pierre Filiu, "Could Al-Qaeda Turn African in the Sahel?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2010, [http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ceip/0019025/f\\_0019025\\_16284.pdf](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ceip/0019025/f_0019025_16284.pdf) (accessed March 21, 2011), 9.

promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”<sup>22</sup> While other GCCs emphasize many of the same themes, AFRICOM places unique emphasis on collaborating with other U.S. government agencies.

Many of the issues facing Africa in general and North West Africa in particular do not fall into traditional military lanes of the road. The fight against terrorism is one of the issues that spans the spectrum from non-military to military options. The 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* recognizes this, listing long- and short-term approaches for the U.S. Government to reduce this threat. In the long-term, the strategy advocates advancing effective democracy, providing societies reliable rule of law and freedom of speech, providing citizens legitimate and peaceful methods to air their grievances; DOS and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) support and lead these programs. To address the immediate threat, the strategy recommends courses of action requiring DOD and the interagency to cooperate; preventing terrorist attacks and denying safe havens each have military, diplomatic, and development options to influence terrorist organizations and local governments.<sup>23</sup> In North West Africa, the specific Algerian nationalist roots of AQIM and the prevalence of its criminal activities over transnational terrorist activities highlight the need for a dual track strategy to address both the causes and symptoms of group’s existence.

Joint Publication 3-26, *Counterterrorism*, further elaborates the “whole of government” approach for U.S. counterterrorism efforts. DOS has the lead to develop policy action plans to end state sponsorship of terrorism, but this could be expanded to include diplomatic and development efforts supporting states trying to eliminate transnational terrorist groups from

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. AFRICOM, *FACT SHEET: United States Africa Command*, October 28, 2008, <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1644> (accessed April 10, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Government, "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," September 2006, [www.merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/nss/strategies/nsct2006.pdf](http://www.merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/nss/strategies/nsct2006.pdf) (accessed September 30, 2010), 9-16.

operating within their borders.<sup>24</sup> Further, SOCOM is responsible for “synchronizing planning for global operations against terrorist networks,” within the military and the interagency. However, the geographic combatant commander is by default the supported commander for counterterrorism operations, due to their knowledge of the operations area, even though SOCOM drafts CONPLAN 7500.<sup>25</sup> While these delineations support each organization’s strengths, it also complicates the development of a coherent and mutually reinforcing counterterrorism strategy.

To address the unique challenges in Africa and to develop an integrated “whole of government” approach, AFRICOM has interagency civilians embedded within the command; in most other GCCs, members of the interagency are liaison officers.<sup>26</sup> The AFRICOM Commander has two co-equal deputies, one of whom is an Ambassadorial-level Foreign Service officer, the Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities.<sup>27</sup> This deputy is responsible for AFRICOM’s activities in health, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and peace support operations.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, during the planning stages, DOD envisioned having 25% of AFRICOM’s headquarters staff provided by the interagency; as of June 2010, 27 interagency civilians were embedded in the headquarters staff, or 2% of the total staff.<sup>29</sup>

According to multiple Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, one critical element that impedes closer collaboration between AFRICOM and interagency efforts is the lack

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<sup>24</sup> U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Counterterrorism, Joint Publication 3-26* (Washington, D.C.: CJCS, 2009), vi.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Counterterrorism*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on the Progress and Challenges Associated with Establishing the U.S. Africa Command,” July 15, 2008, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08947t.pdf> (accessed April 10, 2011), 11.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*; U.S. AFRICOM, *FACT SHEET*.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “National Security: Interagency Collaboration Practices and Challenges at DOD’s Southern and Africa Commands,” July 28, 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-962T> (accessed February 22, 2011), 10.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Defense Management: Improved Planning, Training, and Interagency Collaboration Could Strengthen DOD’s Efforts in Africa,” July 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-794> (accessed February 22, 2011), 29.

of synchronized planning efforts. These reports focused on DOD and DOS planning cycles, but these issues likely extend throughout the entire interagency. For example, the DOS strategic plan spans fiscal years 2007 to 2012, while AFRICOM's theater campaign plan looks at fiscal years 2010 to 2014.<sup>30</sup> Another concern presented to the GAO by the interagency was in many cases, AFRICOM planners did not engage with them during the brainstorming stage nor did the planners leverage the expertise of the interagency experts early in the planning process. The interagency members were often presented with fully drafted plans during AFRICOM's annual activity planning meetings, which does not allow for much discussion or interagency input. Compounding these issues, when AFRICOM's planning occurs at the component commands vice the headquarters, outreach and collaboration at the beginning of the planning process is limited due to the lack of interagency presence at the operational-tactical level.<sup>31</sup>

The final element of the DOD versus DOS equation remains funding. DOS has significantly fewer resources than DOD to complete its missions in the diplomatic and development fields. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has consistently highlighted the need for DOS to receive more funding, particularly as related to allowing DOD to step back from nation-building related activities.<sup>32</sup> The 2006 National Defense Authorization Act attempted to balance some of the funding issues by allowing DOD to use certain funds in concert with DOS, for a limited period. Section 1206 authorizes the Secretary of Defense, with Secretary of State's agreement, to use up to \$350 million per year to train and equip "foreign military forces to perform counterterrorism operations," and "foreign military forces to participate in or to support

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<sup>30</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Interagency Collaboration," 5-6.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Improved Planning," 31-2, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Ann Scott Tyson, "Gates Warns of Militarized Policy," *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/15/AR2008071502777.html> (accessed April 29, 2011); Lisa Daniel, "State Department Needs Iraq Funding, Gates Says," *American Forces Press Service*, February 17, 2011, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=62858> (accessed April 29, 2011).

military and stability operations in which U.S. armed forces are participating.”<sup>33</sup> Section 1207 allows the Secretary of Defense to transfer up to \$100 million per year to DOS to “support reconstruction stabilization, and security activities in foreign countries.”<sup>34</sup>

Between fiscal years 2006 and 2009, over \$1.3 billion was allotted for projects under both 1206 and 1207 authorities.<sup>35</sup> While the funding system has been successful, it underlines the fundamental issue of funding discrepancies between DOD and DOS. For example, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice requested the establishment of Section 1207 to support the activities of DOS’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, which Congress had not funded.<sup>36</sup> As Section 1207 authorities expired at the end of fiscal year 2010, DOS requested \$100 million for USAID’s Complex Crises Fund, described as “similar to Section 1207 Authority.”<sup>37</sup> While the ability to cooperate with improvised funding systems to accomplish tasks is commendable, DOS and USAID must be funded to accomplish their missions without having to rely on DOD. Providing more funding to DOS and USAID should not be viewed as a zero-sum game for DOD; if these organizations can complete their missions, then DOD will not be relied upon to fill the void. Development programs, whether led by DOS and USAID or through DOD’s Theater Security Cooperation Plan, conduct proactive and preventive activities to combat terrorism, which is less expensive than DOD’s reactive, kinetic targeting options.

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<sup>33</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “International Security: DOD and State Need to Improve Sustainment Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation for Section 1206 and 1207 Assistance Programs,” April 15, 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10431.pdf> (accessed April 1, 2011), 6; Nina M. Serafino, “Department of Defense ‘Section 1207’ Security and Stabilization: Background and Congressional Concerns,” *Congressional Research Service*, February 4, 2010, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22871.pdf> (accessed April 1, 2011), 1.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “DOD and State,” 7.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “DOD and State,” 8.

<sup>36</sup> Robert M. Perito, “An Example of Integrated Security Assistance: The 1207 Program,” *United States Institute of Peace*, July 2008, <http://www.usip.org/print/publications/example-integrated-security-assistance-1207-program> (accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Serafino, “‘Section 1207’ Security and Stabilization,” 1.

Despite the guidance in Joint Publication 3-26 and the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, among other strategic documents, it is clear that funding and personnel priorities support military operations against terrorism versus diplomatic or development. While the development of Sections 1206 and 1207 funding authorities attempted to right the imbalances, it clearly has not allowed DOS or USAID to take the lead in developing or implementing counterterrorism policy in their spheres. As such, some would argue the interagency does not have the capacity to be a strong enough partner for DOD and it should continue to take the lead in counterterrorism efforts, including development. For example, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa has a vibrant civil affairs effort focusing on building infrastructure and improving local health care.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the interagency is not supporting AFRICOM with personnel at the levels DOD believes are the most beneficial. DOD has the resources, both funding and personnel, to effectively plan and implement development activities in North West Africa and trying to include DOS and USAID can complicate efforts.

However, this thought process challenges the basic underpinnings of who is in charge of developing and implementing U.S. foreign policy.<sup>39</sup> Following the announcement of AFRICOM's creation and its formal establishment, concerns were voiced that the development of a GCC solely focused on Africa represented the militarization of U.S. foreign policy at the expense of diplomacy and development: DOD leading DOS vice the other way around.<sup>40</sup> In 2008, DOS and USAID officials expressed concerns that "the creation of AFRICOM could blur traditional boundaries among diplomacy, development, and defense, thereby militarizing U.S.

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<sup>38</sup> U.S. AFRICOM. *FACT SHEET: Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa*. 2011. [www.hoa.africom.mil/AboutCJTF-HOA.asp](http://www.hoa.africom.mil/AboutCJTF-HOA.asp) (accessed February 22, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Preliminary Observations," 12.

<sup>40</sup> Robert E Gribbin, "Implementing AFRICOM: Tread Carefully," *Foreign Service Journal* (May 2008): 26, 28; Nicolas van de Wall, "US Policy towards Africa: The Bush Legacy and the Obama Administration," *African Affairs* (2009): 13-15.

foreign policy.”<sup>41</sup> In April 2011, two unnamed senior members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff argued that continuing to focus on threats against the United States and attempting to defeat them solely through the military was an ineffective use of resources. “Credibility requires engagement, strength, and reliability -- imaginatively applied through the national tools of development, diplomacy, and defense,” they argue.<sup>42</sup> Although DOD stated AFRICOM’s role was to support DOS’s diplomatic and development efforts, when looking at resource allocation and activities undertaken in the past two and a half years, the majority of the focus is on DOD activities, regardless of the actual lead agency.<sup>43</sup> To effectively combat terrorism, the United States and its North West African partners must blend civil and military tools to not only defeat current terrorist threats but to prevent the growth of AQIM.

### **How to Improve Phase 0 Counterterrorism Operations**

AQIM attempted to balance multiple goals in the past five years. It retains its goal of overthrowing the Algerian regime and establishing an Islamic state, but it also espouses international ambitions to expand the fight, likely a side effect of its alliance with al Qaida.<sup>44</sup> These foundations as a nationalist Islamist movement that turned to violence to achieve its goals provide the U.S. and its partners a dual track method to combat it. While in some instances military action will be required, DOS and USAID led development activities that address some of AQIM’s fundamental issues with the Algerian regime can eliminate the root of the problem. Therefore, AFRICOM should continue supporting local capacity building, continue interagency collaboration, and leverage indigenous security organizations to build a nuanced plan to mitigate the AQIM threat in North West Africa.

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<sup>41</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Preliminary Observations,” 14

<sup>42</sup> John Norris, “The Y Article,” *Foreign Policy*, April 13, 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/13/the\\_y\\_article?page=0,0](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/13/the_y_article?page=0,0) (accessed April 29, 2011).

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Preliminary Observations,” 14.

<sup>44</sup> Kennedy-Boudali, “Examining U.S. Counterterrorism,” 2.



### *Build partner capacity*

Since AFRICOM's inception, it has focused its efforts on supporting the "3D" concept of operations: defense, diplomacy, and development. Much like U.S. Southern Command, AFRICOM's activities focus on Phase 0 shaping activities: capacity building and humanitarian assistance, vice kinetic military operations.<sup>45</sup> AFRICOM supports multiple capacity building operations throughout the continent, but the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) directly influences North Western Africa. Established in November 2003, TSCTP's predecessor was the Pan-Sahel Initiative, a DOS funded initiative to support the training of military units from Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in counterterrorism tactics.<sup>46</sup> In 2005, the Pan-Sahel Initiative expanded to include Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia, becoming the TSCTP. Moreover, TSCTP expanded to include diplomatic and development elements, such as rule of law, public diplomacy, and security sector reform.<sup>47</sup> DOD's counterpart to TSCTP is Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara, which focuses on overall security issues vice solely committed to counterterrorism issues.<sup>48</sup>

While both DOS and DOD point to TSCTP as a success, concerns exist about not only the "militarization of foreign policy," as discussed earlier, but also about development organizations becoming too involved in security sector reform, which reflects the nuances in combating terrorism. A concern exists that by involving development organizations, specifically USAID, in security sector reform is that law enforcement skills provided to local police forces to

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<sup>45</sup> GEN William "Kip" Ward, USA, "United States Africa Command: Commander's Intent 2011," *United States Africa Command Public Affairs*, January 2011, [www.africom.mil](http://www.africom.mil) (accessed February 22, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Ellis, "Briefing: The Pan-Sahel Initiative," *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (2004): 459, [www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com) (accessed March 21, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> U.S. AFRICOM, "The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership," *United States Africa Command*, [www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp](http://www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp) (accessed February 22, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> U.S. AFRICOM, "Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara," *United States Africa Command*, [www.africom.mil/oef-ts.asp](http://www.africom.mil/oef-ts.asp) (accessed February 22, 2011); Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," *Congressional Research Service*, March 22, 2011, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf> (accessed April 30, 2011), 23-24.

combat terrorism without proper rule of law training could then be used against indigenous populations.<sup>49</sup> However, according to the USAID, DOD, and DOS guide for security sector reform, the United States views activities in this realm as encompassing a “whole of government” training approach, likely to combat potential abuses by local law enforcement, military forces, and governments against their rivals.<sup>50</sup>

Within the combating terrorism account, there is an obvious military element to it, beyond targeting: foreign internal defense and training. To support the interagency, if USAID needs support for rule of law and law enforcement training, AFRICOM could provide reservists with law enforcement experience to assist training sessions. In the purely military realm, AFRICOM supports Operation FLINTLOCK, a yearly training exercise providing tactics, techniques, and procedures for ensuring regional security and stability in North West Africa.<sup>51</sup> An option available to AFRICOM could be use of the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC), a joint U.S.-Jordanian special operations training center. While coordination with CENTCOM would be required, KASOTC is a unique facility focused on counterterrorism training in multiple environments and open to all regional partners. The facility can support multilateral training operations, which would complement indigenous North West African counterterrorism activities. Moreover, KASOTC facilitates the sharing of best practices and lessons learned; inter-regional cooperation builds trust and moves towards unity of effort in

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<sup>49</sup> Alice Hills, "Trojan Horses? USAID, Counterterrorism, and Africa's Police," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2006): 632, [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) (accessed March 21, 2011); Monica Juma, "The Role of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in Preventing and Combating Terrorism," In *African Counterterrorism Cooperation: Assessing Regional and Subregional Initiatives*, ed. Andre LeSage (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), 70.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Government, "Security Sector Reform," *USAID Democracy and Governance*, February 2009, [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/democracy\\_and\\_governance/publications/pdfs/SSR\\_JS\\_Mar2009.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/SSR_JS_Mar2009.pdf) (accessed March 29, 2011), 2-3.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. AFRICOM, "Trans-Sahara Fact Sheet"; The Jamestown Foundation, "AFRICOM's Operation FLINTLOCK: New Partners and New Questions," *Terrorism Monitor*, June 5, 2010, [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org); Ploch, *Africa Command*, 24.

the counterterrorism fight, which is critical for success, as terrorist do not recognize national boundaries.<sup>52</sup>

Ultimately, TSCTP and programs like it are valuable tools to combat terrorism. First, it provides a foundation for interagency cooperation and an opportunity to work towards the same end state. Second, it supports the concept of the inability to “surge trust.” By regularly working with partner countries, when a crisis emerges, strong working relationships are already built to facilitate cooperation. Further, this affords the ability to expand bilateral relationships and multilateral regional relationships, possibly through regional organizations with similar goals to the United States. A delicate balance must be maintained to keep TSCTP a manageable sized program but to include all North West African nations within the threat of violent Islamist extremists. TSCTP works because all members are willing participants. Unfortunately, there remain countries in North West Africa, like Libya, that have its own historical struggles with violent Islamist extremists, which could benefit from regional counterterrorism cooperation. Moreover, current instability in Libya could allow AQIM to establish a foothold previously unattainable due to concentrated counterterrorism operations.

#### *Develop the Interagency*

While AFRICOM’s original vision was to have 25% of its staff be embedded interagency members, it currently stands at 2%, with a goal of 4%.<sup>53</sup> Even with this, communication and synchronization issues exist between AFRICOM and the interagency, particularly DOS and USAID. Having DOD and interagency coordination at AFRICOM headquarters is a positive step, but much of the work within DOS and USAID occurs at the embassy level, where GCC

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<sup>52</sup> Maj Brett McGinley, USMC, interview by Karen Sudkamp, *Discussion about KASOTC* (April 13, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Defense Management: Actions Needed to Address Stakeholder Concerns, Improve Interagency Collaboration, and Determine Full Costs Associated with the U.S. Africa Command," February 2009, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09181.pdf> (accessed April 30, 2011), 19.

representatives, other than the defense attaché, who has other responsibilities, are not stationed. Moreover, there is limited interaction between interagency representatives at AFRICOM headquarters and military planners at AFRICOM's component commands, particularly those not collocated in Stuttgart.<sup>54</sup> The basic organizational differences between DOD and DOS complicate efforts to identify specific counterparts, but AFRICOM should embed personnel at regional embassies, as it requested interagency embeds at AFRICOM headquarters.

This recommendation leverages the operational high value targeting Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) concept used in Afghanistan and Iraq to conduct counterterrorism missions. In this context, military members and civilian interagency representatives sat in the same room every day, working towards the same mission: targeting high value terrorists. While conducting counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, General Stanley A. McChrystal often stated that you must have a network to defeat a network, which is the definition of the JIATF.<sup>55</sup> All participants knew the end state and knew the role of their organization.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, it was difficult not to share information or ignore teammates, as there was nowhere to hide.

By establishing JIATFs in each embassy, the team could develop a counterterrorism plan that reflected the needs of that specific country while keeping in mind limitations that AFRICOM headquarters or DOS's Bureau of African Affairs may not be aware of. Strategic leaders would provide the desired end state, but those with the most direct knowledge of the situation would develop a situation specific plan. JIATFs forward deployed into embassies would also have reach back to colleagues at the operational and strategic levels, which would

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<sup>54</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Interagency Collaboration," 13.

<sup>55</sup> GEN Stanley A. McChrystal, USA (Ret.), "It Takes a Network," *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2011, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/02/22/it\\_takes\\_a\\_network](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/02/22/it_takes_a_network) (accessed April 29, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Lamb, Christopher J., and Evan Munsing, "Secret Weapon: High-value Target Teams as an Organizational Innovation," *Institute for National Strategic Studies*, March 2011, <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/strategic-perspectives/Strategic-Perspectives-4.pdf> (accessed April 1, 2011), 11, 15, 17, 24, 35.

allow collaboration at all policy and military levels.<sup>57</sup> Personnel and space constraints could make it difficult to build a JIATF in each embassy, but having them in the most important regional countries would improve U.S. and host nation coordination and cooperation.

However, by establishing JIATF-like organizations, DOD and the interagency could share information more easily, allowing for unity of effort and fusion between DOD operations and USAID development efforts and FBI law enforcement activities.<sup>58</sup> Theoretically, the embassy country team could be the foundation for a JIATF, but with the singular counterterrorism focus, representatives not normally posted in embassies maybe needed.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, members of the country team have priorities other than the counterterrorism mission, and giving them yet another “critical job” could dilute Phase 0 counterterrorism operations.

#### *Support indigenous efforts*

Another resource AFRICOM can support and leverage is indigenous organizations and alliances. This will prevent charges against the United States only being interested in solutions it leads or develops and takes into account African sensitivities about its colonial history. For example, the African Union (AU) first identified terrorism as an issue of concern in the early 1990s. Despite three documents providing the legal framework for African counterterrorism efforts, resource constraints and limited political will prevent full and successful implementation of the conventions.<sup>60</sup> Differing perspectives on terrorism between the United States and African nations are another issue; many African countries view terrorism as targeting Western interests and not local, hence not their problem, vice Washington’s perspective of trying to alleviate local

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<sup>57</sup> Lamb, “Secret Weapon,” 35.

<sup>58</sup> Lamb, “Secret Weapon,” 12-13.

<sup>59</sup> Robert B. Oakley and Michael Casey Jr., “The Country Team: Restructuring America’s First Line of Engagement,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 47 (4th Quarter 2007): 146-154.

<sup>60</sup> Ibrahim J. Wani, “The African Union Role in Global Counterterrorism,” In *African Counterterrorism Cooperation: Assessing Regional and Subregional Initiatives*, ed. Andre LeSage (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006), 45-6, 51-2.

conditions that lead to international terrorism.<sup>61</sup> AFRICOM support to AU efforts could empower continental counterterrorism efforts and provide an indigenous face to training and operations.

Another example of a regional counterterrorism organization was established in April 2010 specifically to track AQIM: the Joint Military Staff Committee of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, based in Tamanrasset, southern Algeria.<sup>62</sup> This allows greater coordination, cooperation, and collaboration in counterterrorism operations, particularly in AQIM's Saharan area of operations. For example, in July 2010, in response to an AQIM attack against two Malian security forces members, Mali invited Algeria to help pursue the terrorists within its borders.<sup>63</sup> In November 2010, Mali and Mauritania conducted joint patrols targeting AQIM's southern command.<sup>64</sup> Working with and within a locally conceived and led organization provides legitimacy and emphasizes local political will for action.

A final option is to work with NATO and its Mediterranean Dialogue, established in 1994, and includes Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. The Mediterranean Dialogue recognizes the links between Europe and North Africa and the Levant, and the importance each plays in the other's security. The program's aims are: "contribute to regional security and stability, achieve better mutual understanding, and dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries."<sup>65</sup> This relationship was recognized as

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<sup>61</sup> LeSage, Andre. "Terrorism Threats and Vulnerabilities in Africa," In *African Counterterrorism Cooperation: Assessing Regional and Subregional Initiatives*, ed. Andre LeSage (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006), 4, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Andrew McGregor, "Algeria Launches Nation-Wide Counterterrorism Offensive," *Terrorism Monitor*, April 23, 2010; BBC News, *Saharan States to Open Joint Military Headquarters*, April 21, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8633851.stm> (accessed April 12, 2011).

<sup>63</sup> The Jamestown Foundation, "Defiant AQIM Challenges New Regional Counterterrorist Command with Deadly Cross-Border Raid," *Terrorism Monitor*, July 8, 2010: 1-2.

<sup>64</sup> The Jamestown Foundation, "Mali-Mauritanian Joint Counterterrorism Patrols Begin in Sahara/Sahel," *Terrorism Monitor*, November 11, 2010: 2.

<sup>65</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Mediterranean Dialogue*, November 10, 2010, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-413107DA-5E6E0D17/natolive/topics\\_60021.htm?](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-413107DA-5E6E0D17/natolive/topics_60021.htm?) (accessed April 12, 2011).

important to all of the countries' security following the attacks on September 11, 2001.<sup>66</sup>

Working under NATO auspices would provide more resources to help train and collaborate with regional partners.

Moreover, working with NATO and the Mediterranean Dialogue provides an opportunity for AFRICOM to partner with France, the primary colonial power in North West Africa. As discussed previously, France's relationship with some of the countries, particularly Algeria, is fraught with historical tensions. However, French is a common second language in the region and France has historical experience and knowledge of AQIM's operating area. France also has worked with at least Mauritania and Niger on counterterrorist operations, a continuation of training exercises began in the 1960s.<sup>67</sup> Cooperating and training cross regionally recognizes other Western countries have a vital interest in combating terrorism and have best practices to share; Operation FLINTLOCK in 2010 included participants from France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Spain.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, working with France and common partners in North West Africa would leverage longstanding military relationships instead of having to "reinvent the wheel."

## **Conclusion**

By working with the interagency at the lowest common level and empowering regional counterterrorism efforts, AFRICOM will become a model for other Combatant Commanders facing evolving terrorist threats in their areas of responsibility, particularly as operations in Afghanistan and Iraq end. Many terrorist threats facing the United States and her allies and partners remain regional vice transnational threats, and Phase 0 counterterrorism operations

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<sup>66</sup> Dick A. Leurdijk, "NATO's Mediterranean Dialog: The Emergence of a Front Line in the War on Terrorism," May 27-28, 2004, [http://www.atlcom.nl/ap\\_archive/pdf/AP%202004%20nr.%204/Leurdijk.pdf](http://www.atlcom.nl/ap_archive/pdf/AP%202004%20nr.%204/Leurdijk.pdf) (accessed April 12, 2011).

<sup>67</sup> Jean-Luc Marret, "French Counterterrorism Operations in the Sahara," *Terrorism Monitor*, September 23, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> The Jamestown Foundation, "AFRICOM's Operation FLINTLOCK."

methods honed in AFRICOM can be used as a template in other GCCs. GCCs must leverage the knowledge and expertise of interagency partners with critical historical and working knowledge of a particular region to support a single, coherent, “whole of government” strategy to combat terrorism. AFRICOM should not solely focus on interagency collaboration, but also inter-combatant command cooperation to leverage counterterrorism best practices. Concurrently, including regional allies, partners, and organizations in counterterrorism activities, and allowing them to take the lead when appropriate, recognizes their interests and desired end state, which will in the long-term build stronger and lasting relationships. Garnering support for development programs to combat terrorism is difficult, as traditional measures of effectiveness do not exist. Despite the challenge the inability to prove a negative presents, the indirect methods to combat terrorism must be conducted to eliminate the further growth of violent extremist Islamist groups.



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